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Scania calls for quicker transition to cleaner vehicles

Here and now! That was the main theme at Scania's sustainable transport conference in Brussels on 26 January. The Scandinavian food transport logistics company Bring Frigo was one of the participating operators that described what can be achieved in the short perspective. The company strongly believes it will be able to reduce its carbon footprint by 30 percent until 2015.

Political decision makers, representatives of interest organisations and transport operators gathered to discuss how the transport business can meet environmental challenges while maintaining its high service level and transport efficiency.

Scania's President and CEO Leif Östling noted that there is an ageing population of heavy vehicles in Europe. In 1995, 90 percent of all European commercial vehicles at best conformed to the first Euro emission standard. Now, 15 years later, more than half of all commercial vehicles still only meet the Euro 1 and 2 standards, while the Euro 5 standard is already in force.

"Given the slow pace of progress in renewing the vehicle population, it is more important to make full use of all available means to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. These include longer truck and trailer combinations, better logistics systems, alternative fuels and driver training with efficient support systems," Leif Östling said.

Driver training is the single most, and fastest, way to reduce the carbon footprint of transports.

"We know that the difference between skilled and less skilled drivers can be up to 20 percent fuel consumption. Using driver training and support systems, we can easily reduce consumption by 10 percent. By means of engine development, it would take us some 6–7 years to achieve similar savings," Leif Östling observed.

The keynote speaker, European Union Transport Commissioner Siim Kallas, highlighted the need to use less and cleaner energy in meeting the climate challenge. He also emphasised the importance of using infrastructure more efficiently, improving existing roads rather than building new ones and eliminating obstacles to a single European transport market.

"We must use less energy, cleaner energy and use the infrastructure more efficiently," the Transport Commissioner declared.

In the concluding debate, participants agreed that the transport sector must make use of all available measures to reduce CO₂ emissions. Professor Michel Savy, Director of the Observatory of Transport Policies and Strategies in Europe, noted that “unfortunately there is not one solution, and we must patiently adopt one after the other.”

Martin Lundstedt, Scania’s Executive Vice President and Head of Factory and Franchise Sales, called for a more stable policy framework that can help customers decide which technology and fuels to invest in. “We need better guidance and sustainable policies that can enable customers to make investment decisions with a 6–9 year perspective.”

Also participating in the concluding debate were Philip Owen of the European Commission, Bruce Haase of the environment organisation WWF and Machiel Roelofsen of the logistics company Rotra.

Learn more from the conference at www.scania.com/transportconference

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Scania is one of the world's leading manufacturers of trucks and buses for heavy transport applications, and of industrial and marine engines. A growing proportion of the company's operations consists of products and services in the financial and service sectors, assuring Scania customers of cost-effective transport solutions and maximum uptime. Employing some 32,000 people, Scania operates in about 100 countries. Research and development activities are concentrated in Sweden, while production takes place in Europe and South America, with facilities for global interchange of both components and complete vehicles. In 2009, net sales totalled SEK 62 billion and net income amounted to SEK 1.1 billion.

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